

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 550

INFO AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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SUBJECT: TINDEMANS MAKES LAST-RESORT EFFORT TO FORM
SOCIAL CHRISTIAN/LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

REF: BRUSSELS 2212

1. SUMMARY. WITHIN NEXT DAY OR TWO WE EXPECT IT WILL
BECOME CLEAR WHETHER TINDEMANS CAN FORM A SOCIAL CHRISTIAN/
LIBERAL GOVERNMENT. THIS WOULD BE A TRANSITIONAL GOVERN-
MENT THAT WOULD EITHER BE JOINED BY OTHER PARTIES LATER
OR RESIGN. BEHIND DIFFERENCES ON QUESTIONS OF SCHOOLING,
ABORTION, STATE CONTROL OVER AND PARTICIPATION IN INDUSTRY
ETC., UNDERLYING CAUSES PREVENT AGREEMENT ON A MAJORITY COAL-
ITION ARE (1) DIVISIONS WITHIN THE SOCIALIST PARTY OVER THE PROS
AND CONS OF PARTICIPATING IN GOVERNMENT AND (2) RESERVATIONS
BY WALLONIAN SOCIAL CHRISTIANS AND SOME SOCIALISTS TOWARDS
FEDERALISTIC INNOVATIONS THEY FEAR WOULD THREATEN LONG
TERM STABILITY OF THE BELGIAN STATE. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING THE FAILURE OF THE SOCIAL CHRISTIANS
(CVP/PSC) AND FEDERALIST-LINGUISTIC PARTIES (VU,RW-FDF)
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TO REACH AGREEMENT AT STEENOKKERZEEL CASTLE MEETING

APRIL 19-20 ON A COMMON PLATFORM FOR A BROAD, NON-SOCIALIST MAJORITY COALITION, TINDEMANS HAS TURNED AS OF APRIL 21-22 TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LIBERALS (PVP-PLP) FOR A MINORITY COALITION.

3. IF SUCCESSFUL, TINDEMANS WOULD FORM GOVERNMENT THIS WEEK OR EARLY NEXT WEEK THAT WE WOULD EXPECT WOULD SURVIVE ONLY UNTIL EITHER (A) JOINED BY THE SOCIALISTS AFTER A CHANGE OF HEART, AND (B) THE HOLDING OF ANOTHER EARLY ELECTION OR (C) A CHANGE OF HEART BY THE WALLONIAN SOCIAL CHRISTIANS TOWARDS COOPERATION WITH THE FEDERALIST-LINGUISTIC PARTIES.

4. THE FIRST OF THESE OPTIONS IS THE MOST LIKELY, ACCORDING TO CURRENT INDICATIONS. MANU RUYS, POLITICAL EDITOR OF DE STANDAARD, TELLS US THAT THE ANTI-PARTICIPATIONIST ELEMENTS IN THE PSB, LINKED TO FGFB LEADER DUBUNNE, HAVE ONLY THE NARROWEST OF ADVANTAGE OVER PSB PRO-PARTICIPATIONISTS LED BY OUTGOING PREMIER EDMOND LEBURTON.

5. ACCORDING TO RUYS, THE CRITICAL FACTOR IN THE FAILURE OF THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN AND THE FEDERALIST PARTIES TO COME TO TERMS IS THE ABIDING FEAR ON THE PART OF CHARLES-FERDINAND NOTHOMB AND OTHER WALLONIAN SOCIAL CHRISTIANS THAT FEDERALISM (WHICH THEY SEE AS TANTAMOUNT TO SEPARATISM) WOULD SO WEAKEN THE FABRIC OF THE BELGIAN STATE AS TO POSE A SERIOUS IF LONG TERM (15-20 YEARS) THREAT TO THE SURVIVAL OF BELGIUM AS A NATION STATE. ACCORDING TO RUYS AND OTHER EMBASSY SOURCES, THIS FEAR ALSO EXISTS AMONG SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERS, MORE STRONGLY AMONG FLEMISH SOCIALISTS THAN AMONG WALLONIAN SOCIALISTS.

6. IT IS RUMORED THAT THE PSB WILL TRY TO POSTPONE RECONSIDERING PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT UNTIL IT CAN EVALUATE THE RESULTS OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. STRAUSS-KHURY

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